

-TITLE-SARA KOHANE
-I_DATE-
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-RESTRICTIONS-
-SOUND_QUALITY-
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-DURATION-
-LANGUAGES-
-KEY_SEGMENT-
-GEOGRAPHIC_NAME-
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3 children - she was youngest - Public school in Poland - only for Jewish children - Went to Gymnasium. Lived in Center of city - not Jewish neighborhood. There were Jewish people down the road. Close to churches - religious center - pilgrims came for miracles.

Had bad feelings that she didn't kneel. Brother went to Hebrew school - sister went to --

Father was a forestman - had to find another job doesn't quite remember why.

Vilna - mother (Vilnus) - Teraki - Father was part of Poland when she was born became part of Russia. Family nearby both parents have brothers and sisters. Remembers mother's father's funeral. Lived in apartment - not many people had homes in city - had business - lived in apartments. Middle class.

Semi-religious household mother was shaven 1927 - born in Vilna.

Jewish friends - All of them - Family had good relations with Christians - mother was blond blue eyed.

Maiden name was Bruceno. Uncle here - father youngest brother. When aware of anti-Semitism 10 or 11 young man stand in entrance to doorway. Ran in street shouting "Beat the Jews" - universities in area - Jews had to sit in back - just a few selected Jews. Christian holidays - would get drunk - and beat up Jews.

Easier to live in that society by not being openly Jewish - spoke Polish no t Yiddish.

Head of school was baptized Jewess - Anti-Semitism in schools?

Sister is 4 1/2 years older - still alive - most teachers were Jewish. Heard remarks in neighborhood. Brother played with janitor's son - anti-Semitism part of life. Invasion of Russians was peaceful in '39 - was affected - food became scarce - people hoarded - family had enough Russians - stayed just a year - left in '40 - Vilna (capital of Lithuania today).

Many Russians came - friendly no connections with political - she was 12 - Brother was serving in Polish Army - radio engineer - sister wanted to become dressmaker (she was 16 or 17).

Wanted to study - Russians turned city over to Lithuanians - not bad at time - had to speak in L. - became very nationalistic - great difference in languages.

1941 Heard bombs - no real invasion - Russia had pact with Germany - not to attack. Didn't personally know what was going on in Poland - Could have run to Russia - just a couple of days of bombing - on outskirts - Troops came into the city - gave out regulations to public - remembers - said a Jew shot at them - they would then shoot 10 Jews - was beginning - I didn't see it.

A couple of weeks later - troops were close to home - couldn't leave house - no school - only mother went out. Father was warned that someone was looking for him and he would be shot - he disappeared - one day he did not come home - mother didn't know where he was - he went somewhere in Russia - Brother was in Lydia - worked on Radio station - Russia - had a pair of leather boots - truck left without him - he walked back to Vilna. Jewish mates began disappearing from streets - lost many cousins this way - told they were going to work in 1941.

Created 2 ghettos - at home with mother, brother, sisters. Police came to each building - asked janitor about Jewish families in building - everyone cooperated with the Germans.

Janitor told - Germans came to their apartment - told them to pack bags - from their apartment building they saw a gate being made for the ghetto - some people lived in place near prison - those Jews where shot at prison - no other reason to be shot - didn't want to move people - to far a distance, brother already in ghetto - met some family there.

Stopped tape - Started tape again. Making a gate for ghetto. Jews taken to prison and shot - the ones who lived close. The others went to the Ghetto.

Left home, left everything - went mother, mothers' sister and brothers, neighbors - no resistance - as she know people didn't know.

As a child mother told her about 1st WW - guns were present there - so I thought this was the same.

Non Jewish neighbors - small candle factory near the building - nuns - she spent time watching them make. She tried to get some things to them - but the super was watching - he wanted these things.

She took off the Star of David - looked in janitors apartment - he had all their paintings. The nuns gave her food but they were afraid.

Conditions in ghetto - 4 families in one room - several streets closed off - people were allowed just to go to walk. Germans, Lithuanians - Jewish govt in ghetto. His brother worked for Germans - I dug ditches at air port and sister about 14 - watched over by Germans.

Treatment depended on guard - sometimes they were beaten.

Mother stayed in Ghetto - 2 kind of people there - legal and illegal - illegal did not have papers. "Jews who were not supposed to be there "a cleaning" - people called to gates, put on trucks to go to work - ones left behind - never seen again - Then rumors - Poles said they heard shootings at night - knew Jews had been killed there.

Second time, people didn't go willingly this time. So they rounded up people. Friends in house - old man let's hide in house - we'll conceal door with the buffet - and hide in that room.

30 people in room - no food - Heard Germans mostly drunk - Lithuanians going through house, moving furniture and banging. They left - we stayed i room for 3 days. Did it once more - a women put a pillow over child's mouth to quiet her. Room had a balcony - went up on roof didn't have time to cover the hole to attic - 2 men stood there.

(2nd time woman came back and said I have been to .. and I have seen them make big graves, after digging them, made people come and shot. She was shot in arm. though she was dead - she stayed there overnight, ran back to Ghetto - The Jewish -- in Ghetto. Better to save some by letting others die.

They made hers story sound like lies. Germans gave order to preserve miniature city - Build Jewish young men at Ghetto to reproduce - brought .. to Ghetto. Active with partisans.

Young men planned resistance - her brother was one.

Sitting in attic they saw the police - heard them say we went there - they stayed in hiding for 2 days again.

Supplied with food - I was illegal - I went out on daily jobs only - Mother protective. Mother undernourished - said she wasn't hungry to give us the food- Smuggled some food - checked at the gate had to bring food in.

1st year - not enough to eat - 2nd year worse. In '43 they came, closed up ghetto, taken to brother said goodbye - now "everybody's on their own".

In 2 years she dug next to the sewage a tunnel out - brother went out that way to join partisans.

They were marched, separated men and women - next day - told to go - my mother and I - sister disappeared - selection left or right - assigned left to be killed - Drunk pushed people on left - I got feeling this was not good - I told guard I'm young I want to live, he said no - I pushed myself to selecting German, pushed me to left - I got up - tried 3 times to get away - he beat me up - I passed out - selection was over - he was gone - someone else there picked up my chin - pushed me to right - mother was gone.

Taken to cattle car - people jammed 3 days - no food or drink - people pushed me down to go get bread - I heard my name - Sara - my sister called!

In ghetto - her friend - whole family gone - 95 people in family were taken. Try to get to Polish people who had some jewelry from her father.

Took of Stars. They have pointed out by Lith - at selection - she yelled my name - after several days in Latvia - I don't know if crematoria - selected to go to a work camp in Riga worked 1 year. Some taken from there. took rest of survivors sent to Germany to Stuthoff. Those who were not killed were so degraded - only called by number.

Psychologically - did not want to live - If you couldn't get up, they shot you.

Clothes taken, given address, no undergarments - shoes with wooden soles - kept together with strings - lice.

I worked - always punished - made to stand in rows outside in snow. If work starts at 6 - get up at 4 - stay outside till they counted us.

Women with black mouths, lack of vitamins - I put piles of shoes together.

Needed people to work on farm - harvest. My friend said she was going - my sister said lets go - it was true went to a farm worked for 3 months - sugar beets deep in soil - bent over.

Paradize compared to concentration camp in Germany. Jews got food last soup - bread - got potatoes - had 1/2 day off on sundays.

3 Months back to Stutthof - evacuated to another camp.

Mainly construction - airfields - barracks very hard - (freed in

3/45)

From P took us on journey - heard they were going to put us on ship and sink - the Russians were coming. We walked days, no food - people shot whoever couldn't get up was shot. After several days - sister got typhus - we held her up. One day woke up - no soldiers - saw a few Russians - They told us we were free to go wherever we wanted. Never told my children. Cannot tell about things in detail.

It is impossible for a kind person to do - Always people try to such degradation - much inhumanity is impossible to understand.

Soldiers had families - How could they - I saw a man being stamped to death by the Kommanders - for talking up - he beat them to death.

German and Polish women beat for nothing. A guard always picked on her - had rubber stick - beat her over head. Punished constantly- How can a human being think of killing another.

Degradation most beastly - the starvation, beatings, punishment-

Brother went on mission - one machine gun - I went asked farmer in winter if ice is hard - he said yes - we look - he fell in - 3 months before Vilna was liberated by russians my only consolation he did not die by a German hand.

What a day in camp in ghetto no possessions - if you left to work you owned nothing - you never knew if you were coming back.
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